

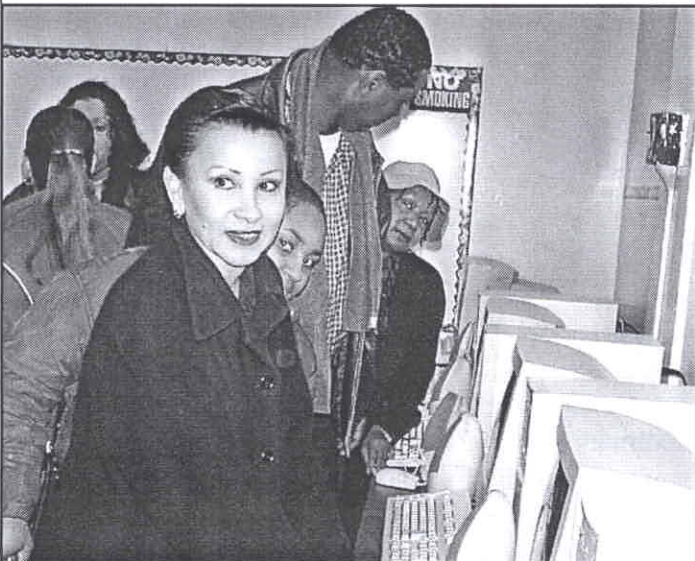
Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democrat, House Small Business Committee



Velázquez To Host NYCHA Town Hall Meetings Community invited to plan for housing policy hearing

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez will host a series of town hall meetings to discuss the New York City Housing Authority's plan for the coming year. The meetings will help prepare the community for the August 21 hearing NYCHA must hold by law to discuss its plan.



Congresswoman Velázquez has long supported rights for housing residents. Here she meets with tenants in Williamsburg.

NYCHA is proposing several controversial new policies that require a response. For example, NYCHA will soon impose a community service requirement on tenants signing new leases.

The agency also proposes to change how rent in public housing is determined. While NYCHA is moving toward a flat rent system, there may be no protection against rent increases in the meantime.

Lastly, NYCHA would like to promote "deconcentration of poverty" housing by encouraging higher-income families to move to public housing. But this may be done at the expense of current tenants and those most in need of public housing.

Your town hall meeting with Congresswoman Velázquez will be held Tuesday, August 14, at the Williamsburg Eastern District YMCA at Borinquen Plaza Ctr., 6:30 p.m. at 125 Humboldt St. in Brooklyn.

Velázquez Unveils Patients' Bill of Rights Bill would require bilingual services at HMOs

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, in her continuing fight to increase patients' rights and access to quality healthcare, unveiled legislation titled "The Managed Care Bill of Rights for Consumers" last month.

The bill includes:

- coverage for prescription medicine and standards for generic substitutions
- coverage for all medical emergencies, choice of doctor, guaranteed gynecological and specialist care
- continuity of treatment after contract termination
- confidentiality
- an appeals process for HMO decisions.

The bill also establishes a Managed Care Consumer Advisory Commission to help consumers understand their rights, access services, and make informed decisions about their health care plan.

This legislation will focus on one critical aspect of the healthcare debate that has been overlooked – the health needs of minority communities, particularly the Spanish-speaking population. In New York City alone, 20 percent of the population speaks a language other than English.

For many not speaking English as their first language, negotiating managed care is overwhelming and frightening. Velázquez's bill would require bilingual medical services for languages spoken by at least two percent of HMO enrollees. This bill is aimed at helping language minorities gain the access they need to reliable, quality healthcare.

Court Says Power Plants Require Health Review

Community activists praise win for environmental justice

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez hailed a New York Appellate Division decision last month ruling that the state broke the law by failing to conduct environmental impact surveys for air pollution caused by the placement of low-wattage power plants in Sunset Park and throughout the metropolitan region.

Community members and activists, who filed the lawsuit, celebrated at a press conference the day the decision was announced. Congresswoman Velázquez congratulated the groups that organized to stop this assault on the City's environment, including New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, New York Public Interest Research Group, CURE, UPROSE, El Puente, Williamsburg Watch, Nos Quedamos, NYCEJA, NRDC, Stop the Barge, The Point CDC and NAG.

"This is a major victory for environmental justice in Brooklyn," Velázquez declared in Washington. "The law says and the court agreed: the state cannot locate new, polluting industry without determining how it affects those living there. Poor and minority communities are more likely to have dirty power plants located in their neighborhoods. It is no wonder the court specifically cited asthma-inducing pollution, as this district has one of the

highest asthma rates in the City."

Velázquez has long fought against placement of industry that pollutes the water and air. She has opposed both the City's and state's attempt to locate waste transfer stations and power plants in the 12th District. In Washington, Congresswoman Velázquez has filed two Environmental Justice complaints with the Environmental Protection Agency under its now-threatened Environmental Justice office in order to prevent the siting of more polluting facilities in Red Hook, Williamsburg and Greenpoint. In January, she testified against the plant siting before Community Board #7 and the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

More NYC-Area Plants Awaiting OK

PROJECT	LOCATION	SIZE
East River	Manhattan	360 mw
East Coast Power-Linden	Linden, N.J.	90 mw
NISA Electric	Brooklyn	79.9mw
NRGAstoria	Queens	79.9mw
Gotham Power-Bronx	Bronx	79 mw
Gotham Power-Brooklyn	Brooklyn	40 mw

KeySpan Tanks Go Down in a Blast of Glory

Velázquez calls for re-use of landmark Greenpoint property

The famous KeySpan tanks finally fell last month in a planned implosion designed to level the huge towers. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, who raised concerns about the health effects of the demolition, pledged her support for developing the property for re-use.

An unmistakable Greenpoint landmark, the twin 400-foot tanks had been standing since 1927 and 1948. Empty for years, without use and considered an eyesore by some, they were destroyed for redevelopment.

KeySpan Energy, which owns the towers, announced

months ago it would level the towers and consult with the community to develop the property. Community and environmental activists immediately tried to block the explosion, citing health concerns. A judge eventually cleared the way for the demolition.

"Now that the tanks are down, KeySpan must cooperate with the Greenpoint community to find a suitable use for the property," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "I am committed to supporting green space or light economic development in Brooklyn."

City Drops Auction Plans for Cypress Hills

Velázquez helped get time for LDC to develop property

Land set aside for redevelopment in Cypress Hills has been dropped from a public auction, which would have wrecked efforts by the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation from pursuing retail and employment opportunities at the site.

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez was instrumental in pressuring the City to cancel the sale. In a letter to Deputy New York City Mayor Joseph Lhora, Congresswoman Velázquez asked the City to remove the land from public auction so that the LDC could complete its work for commercial development.

"I urge you and the Administration to withdraw this parcel...so that we may accomplish what we originally set out to do: provide much-needed retail and employment opportunities for the Cypress Hills community," Congresswoman Velázquez wrote.

The City, however, has announced it will put Cypress Hills back on the auction block if the LDC does not build a financial package for development. Congresswoman Velázquez will continue to support the LDC's effort to build at the site.

Grants Awarded to Our Community

CUNY/Brooklyn College.....\$350,000
Supports 'virtual' student service center

Brooklyn Children's Museum.....\$10,000
Supports cultural anthropology exhibits